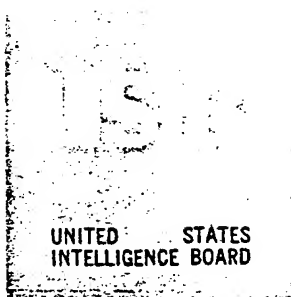


**ARMED FORCES JOURNAL**

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# **National Intelligence Bulletin**

**00879**

## Advise and Dissent

LOOKS LIKE SECRETARY of State Kissinger is not only a master diplomat. After many attempts by many people, the persistent Secretary may have finally sliced through the bureaucratic crust of the U.S. intelligence community. At last he and the President are now getting current intelligence reports that include dissenting views of agencies that contribute to those reports.

Ever since Central Intelligence Agency was created after WW II, it has jealously guarded its prerogative to "polish" the intelligence reaching the President and cabinet officers. The process of presenting "agreed" intelligence to the highest policy makers has sometime resulted in bland intelligence judgments. In many cases, any suggestion of contrasting views was smothered in conference by smarter, stronger, or brighter participants charged with processing national intelligence.

The primary members of the foreign intelligence community which are State Department, Defense Department, National Security Agency, and at times the Federal Bureau of Investigation, have theoretically had an equal say with the Central Intelligence Agency in the production of national intelligence. The Director of CIA, however, is also Director of Central Intelligence for the President, and therefore ultimately responsible for the intelligence that reaches him. Invariably, the "agreed" intelligence that did, conformed closely to the views of CIA analysts.

But a new daily current intelligence publication, a National Intelligence Bulletin, first published on 29 May, changes much of that. At Kissinger's insistence the new publication, which replaces the Central Intelligence Bulletin, candidly includes the dissenting views of the "community." An agency's differing view is included in the body of the report. In the now discontinued Central Intelligence Bulletin, a "footnote" was used as a disclaimer in the very rare cases when a contributing agency insisted. During the tenure of the Central Intelligence Bulletin an average of four footnotes a year appeared in the publication. In the new Intelligence Bulletin, dissent is almost a daily occurrence.

Over the years the CIA insistence on "agreed" intelligence has resulted in some real gaffes in national intelligence judgments. Among those are:

- The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was not predicted by the U.S. intelligence community. Despite an obvious seven week buildup of Soviet troops on the Czech border, the first word of the Soviet entrance into Czechoslovakia reached Washington by press ticker shortly after the Soviet Ambassador advised the Johnson White House that the invasion was imminent.

- Intelligence judgments made in Washington underestimated "by a factor of six" the amount of supplies going to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville in the late 60's (see AFJ Better Deal for Service Spooks, Dec 1971).

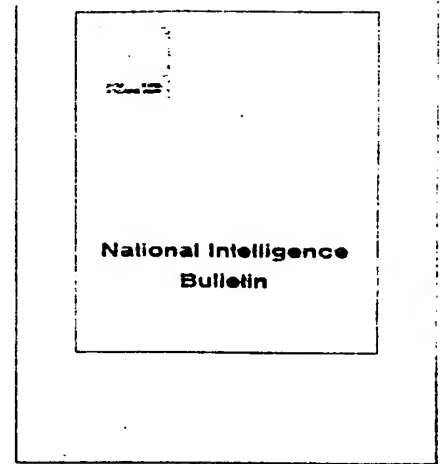
- The 6 October 1973 Egyptian invasion of Israel was not expected by the U.S. intelligence community. On that morning, as the Egyptian crossing of the Suez was underway, the "agreed" position of the U.S. intelligence community was, "It is highly unlikely that the current military activity in the Mideast will evolve into a large scale conflict" (or words to that effect).

These and other intelligence judgments conceivably could have been less damaging if a few dissenting opinions had been allowed to creep into intelligence reports reaching the President.

Although no one will admit it, the creation of the National Intelligence Bulletin, where dissenting opinion is encouraged, is a direct outgrowth of the intelligence reporting leading up to last October's Yom Kippur War.

It is the brainchild of the Intelligence Community Staff which was created at CIA to improve coordination of national intelligence. The staff is headed by the outspoken and controversial Army Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham. (Prior to his current assignment, Graham was in the Defense Department advocating greater military participation in the estimating of foreign military capabilities.) One of Graham's principal assistants is bright and hard nosed Marine Col. Peter Armstrong, who has spent most of the last six months trying to figure out why U.S. assessments of the military strengths and objectives in the Mideast were so biased in Israel's favor.

The actual operation of the new bulletin is the responsibility of a National Intelligence Bulletin staff which reports directly to the director of Central Intelligence. The Central Intel-



ligence Agency is only one of the contributing agencies to the intelligence reports contained in the new bulletin. Heading up the National Intelligence Bulletin staff is a seasoned former CIA intelligence civilian supergrade Harry Cochrane. It is Cochrane, along with other permanent staff members provided by Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency and others, who make final judgments on what gets in the publication.

Processing the daily intelligence production is comprehensive and timely. Using noncritical intelligence gathered on a 24 hour basis by operation centers at State Department, CIA, Defense, and NSA, intelligence analysts in the various agencies submit articles for publication. These proposed articles are immediately transmitted to the National Intelligence Bulletin staff using a \$13 million Long Distance Xerox (LDX) system. (This system can transmit a facsimile of a hardcopy document within seconds.) The NIB staff circulates the proposed items to all contributing agencies for comment. It then incorporates the views of the community into a finished intelligence article.

Working directly for the Director of Central Intelligence (not CIA), the National Bulletin staff gives the views of the Central Intelligence Agency the same weight as other contributors. If the systems works correctly, the President and cabinet officers get balanced and unvarnished intelligence assessments of fast moving developments on a regular basis.

It's too early to tell just how effective the new publication is. Reaction to the sterile appearing 8" x 10" blue and white covered document has been reserved. Its success depends to a great extent on the degree of independence and objectivity Harry Cochrane and his NIB staff exercise in selecting intelligence for publication. Their veto authority on the publication of intelligence reports proposed by contributing agencies is a potential obstacle to a free flow of intelligence at the national level.

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